

# Too Short FRED

SUSAN MEDDAUGH





# 100 SHORT FRED

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Poor Fred. When his friends set off to play on the far side of the hill, he's always the one who has to yell, "Wait up!" At the school party he gets the partner nobody else has chosen, the tallest girl in the class. If there's a rock or a baby or a flower in the school play, for sure that's Fred. A bully snatches his treasured peanut butter sandwiches (once too often), and even his own uncle hurts his feelings (until Fred learns the truth about his overbearing relative).

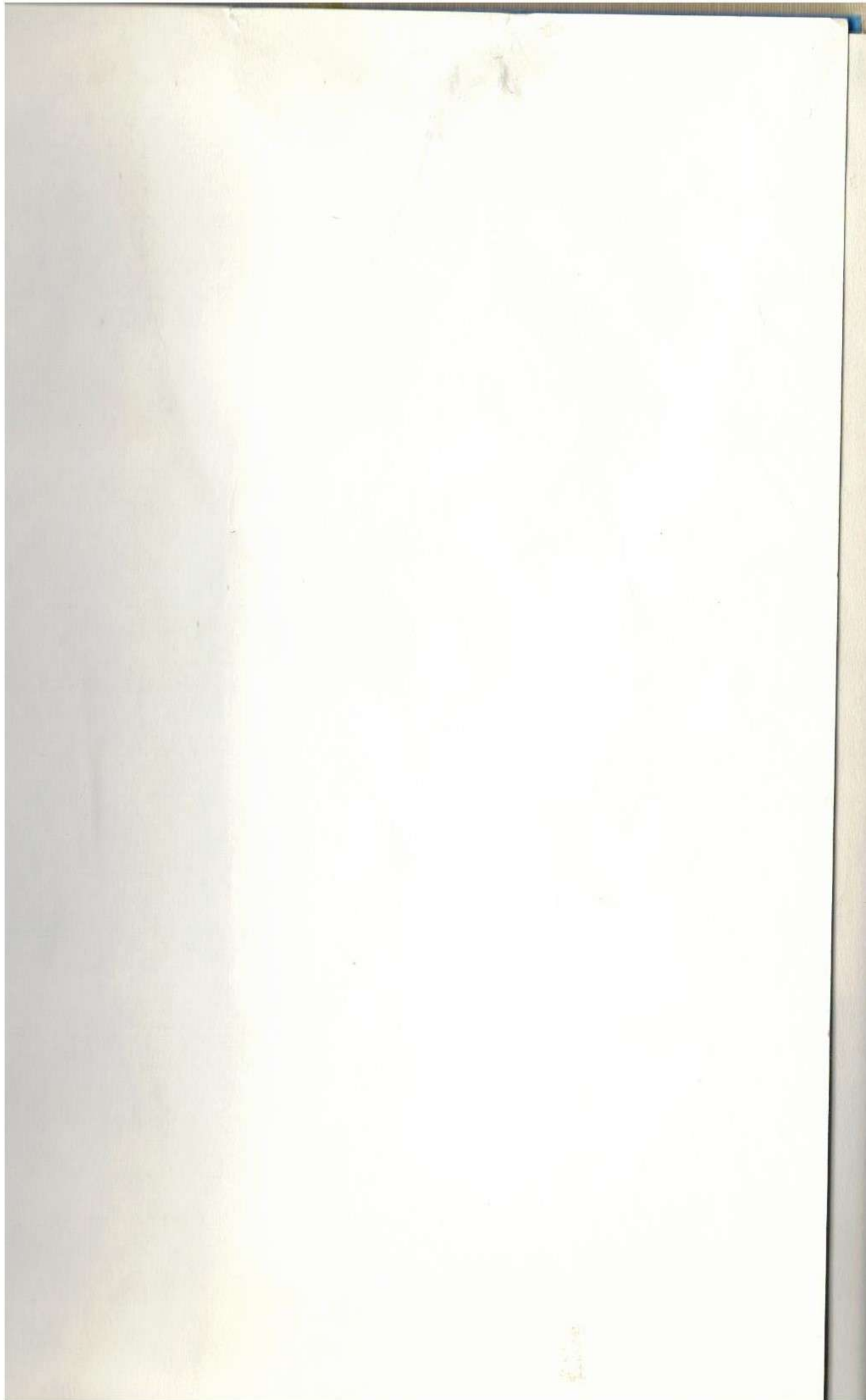
These five mini-stories about an underdog - a cat in this case - recount the trials and triumphs of being Fred. Short but undaunted, he eventually finds the bright side in every situation. In her first picture book, Susan Meddaugh brings together a very special sensitivity and gentle humor for a fresh look at an eternal problem.



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# Too Short FRED

SUSAN MEDDAUGH



Houghton Mifflin Company Boston 1978

# For my parents

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## Fred and the Snowstorm

On a snowy morning, Fred and his friends set off to play on the far side of the hill.

“Wait up,” said Fred.





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"Let's have a race," said Donald.

"Whoever gets to the other side first is the winner."

"I'm no good at races," thought Fred.

"I always come in last."





Fred hurried along as fast as his short legs would carry him.

"This snow is getting deeper," thought Fred.



Soon his friends were far ahead of him.



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Fred walked and walked, and it snow  
and snowed.

"I can't see a thing," said Fred.





Fred didn't know he had reached the top of the hill.

"Whoops," said Fred. He fell head over tail down the other side.





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Fred was a snowball rolling downhill  
He rolled past trees. He rolled  
past bushes. He rolled past his  
friends and didn't stop rolling until  
he came to the bottom of the hill.







Fred got up and brushed off the snow.  
When his friends arrived, Fred was  
waiting for them.  
“What took you so long?” said Fred.





## Fred Goes to the School Dance

Fred stood in a corner at the school dance.

"I hate dances," said Fred. "All the girls are taller than I am."



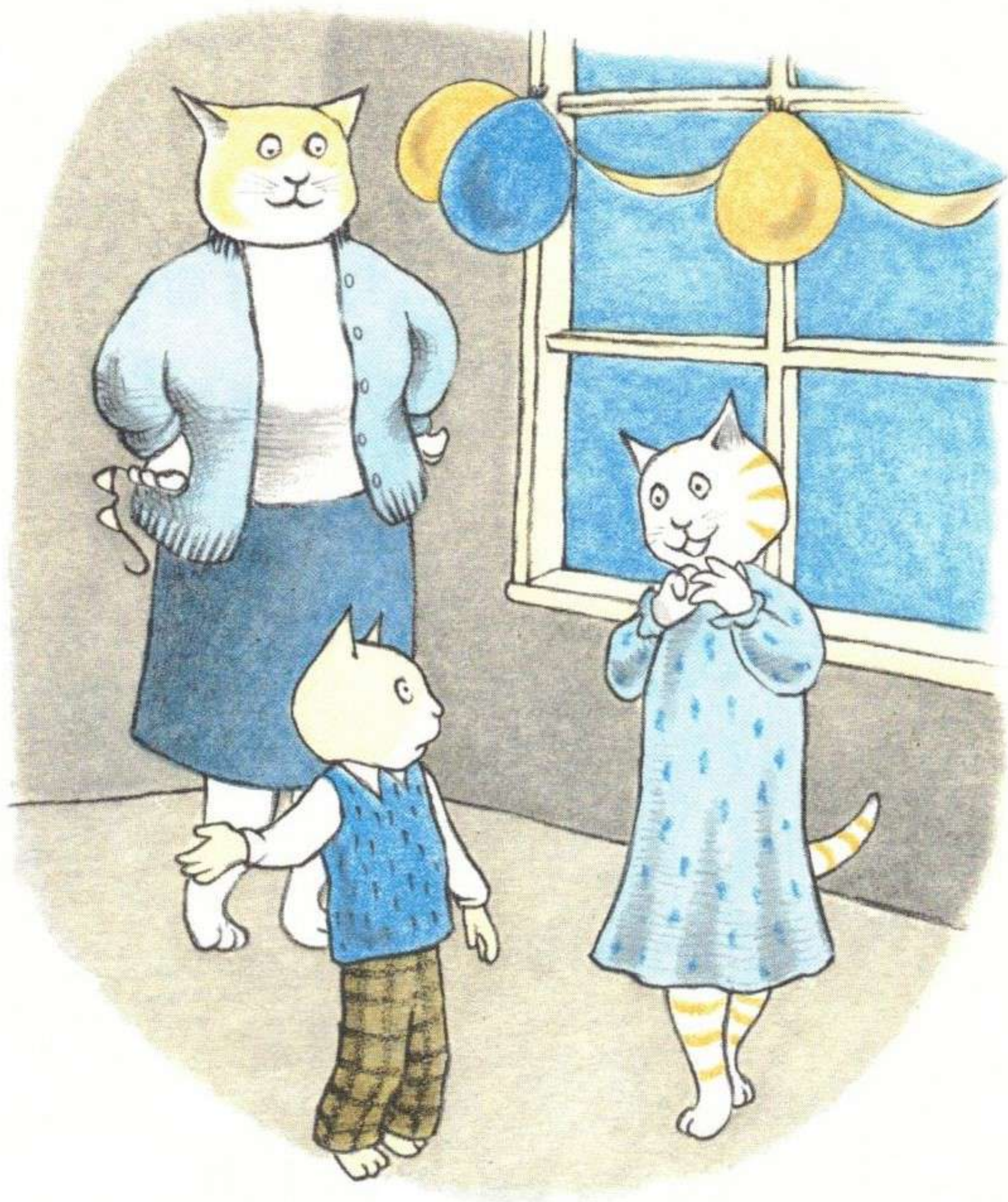


“Why aren’t you dancing?” Fred’s teacher asked him. “Isabel Robbins doesn’t have a partner.”

“Isabel Robbins!” gasped Fred. “She’s the tallest girl in class!”







"Don't be shy," said his teacher.  
She led him across the room and left  
him standing in front of Isabel.  
"May I have this dance?" Fred asked.  
Isabel smiled from ear to ear.



Isabel took Fred firmly by the hand.



“I’ve been practicing some new dance steps,” she said. “I think you’ll like them.”





Fred was surprised to find himself flying through the air.





The rest of the class stopped dancing  
to watch Fred and Isabel.





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"Dancing with Isabel looks like fun,"  
said Donald.

"I never knew Fred was such a good  
dancer," said Sara T.

Everyone cheered for Fred and Isabel.

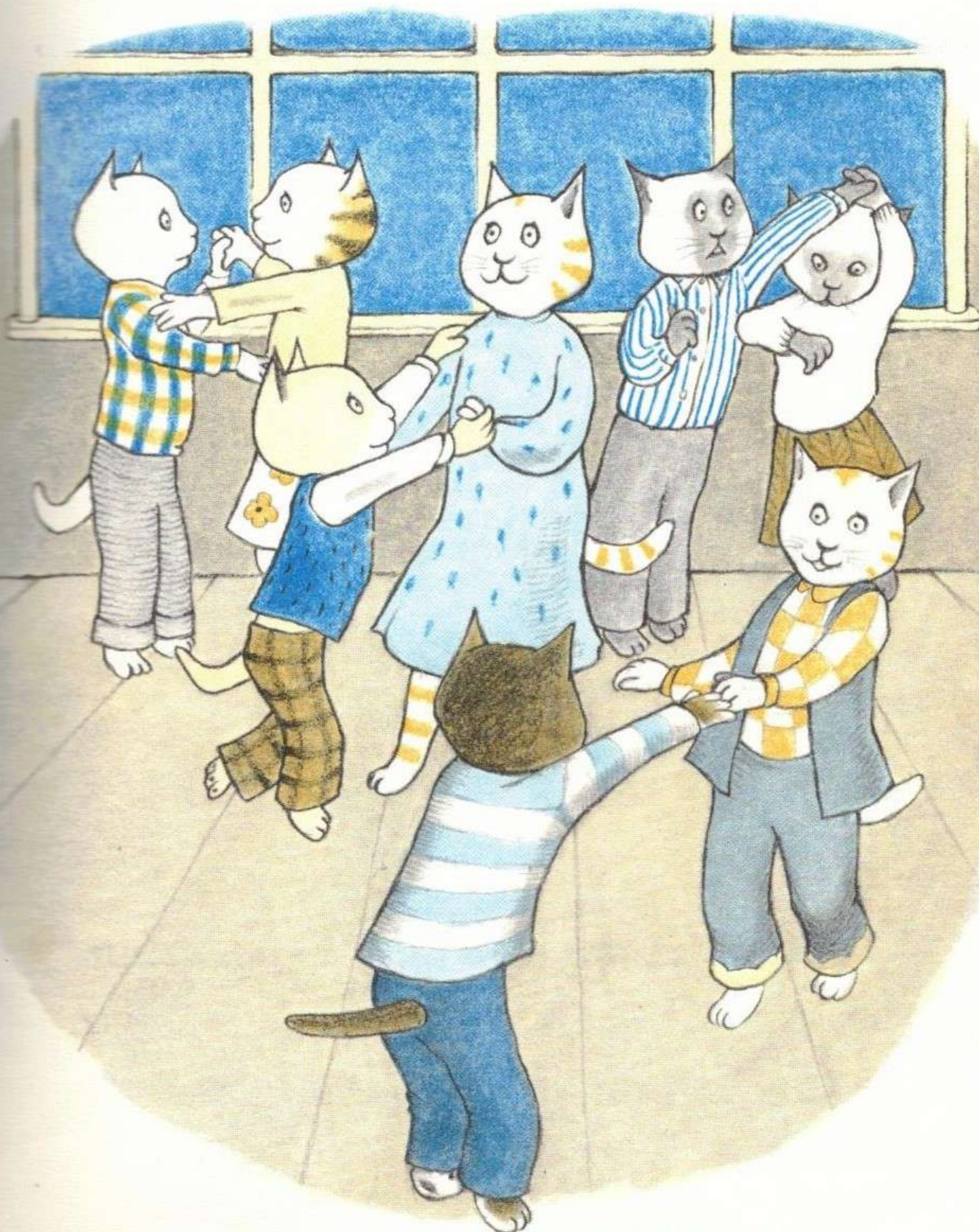




When the music stopped, Isabel said:

"May I have the next dance, Fred?"

"I was hoping you'd ask," said Fred.



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## Fred and the Play

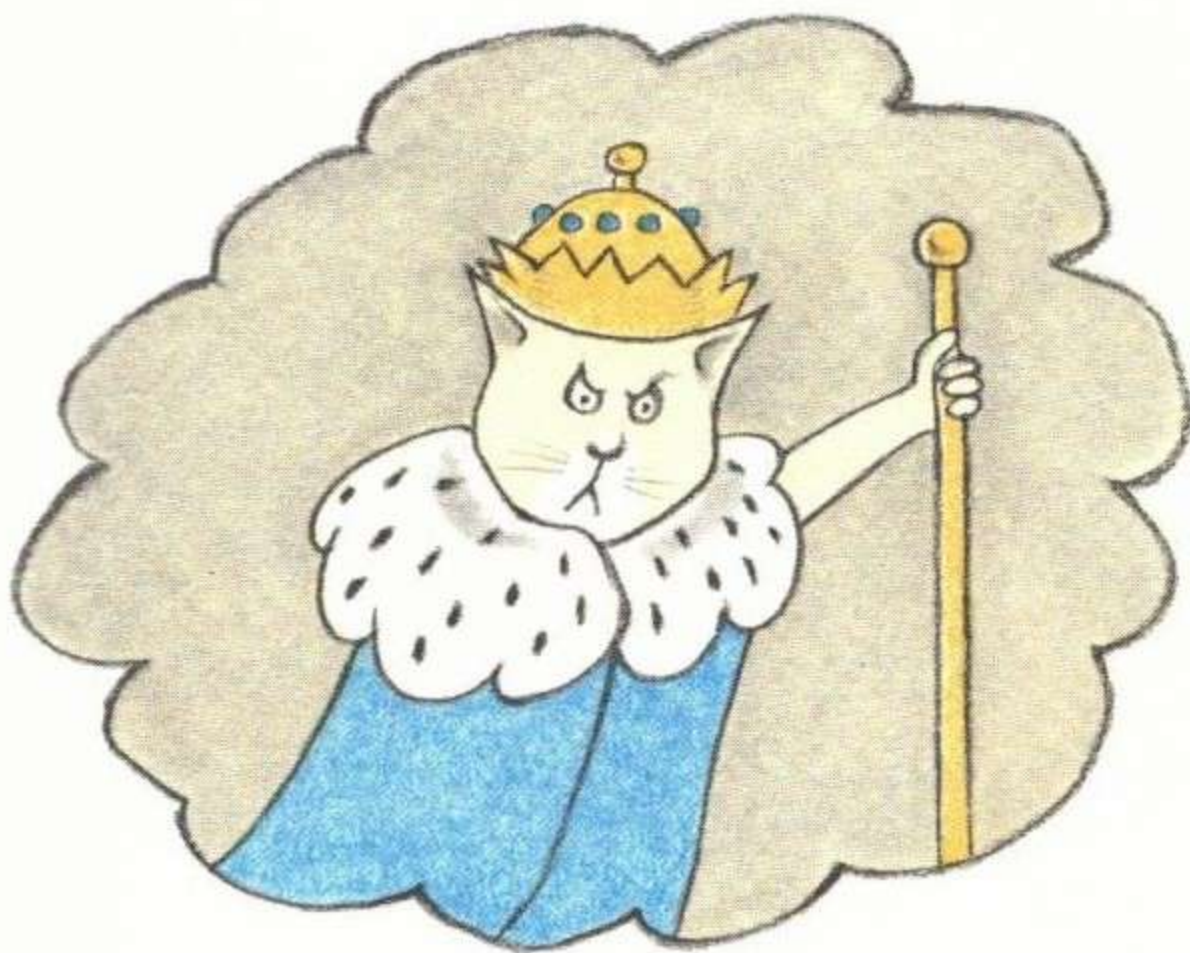


Fred saw a new sign on the auditorium door.

"Oh boy," said Fred. "That's for me."

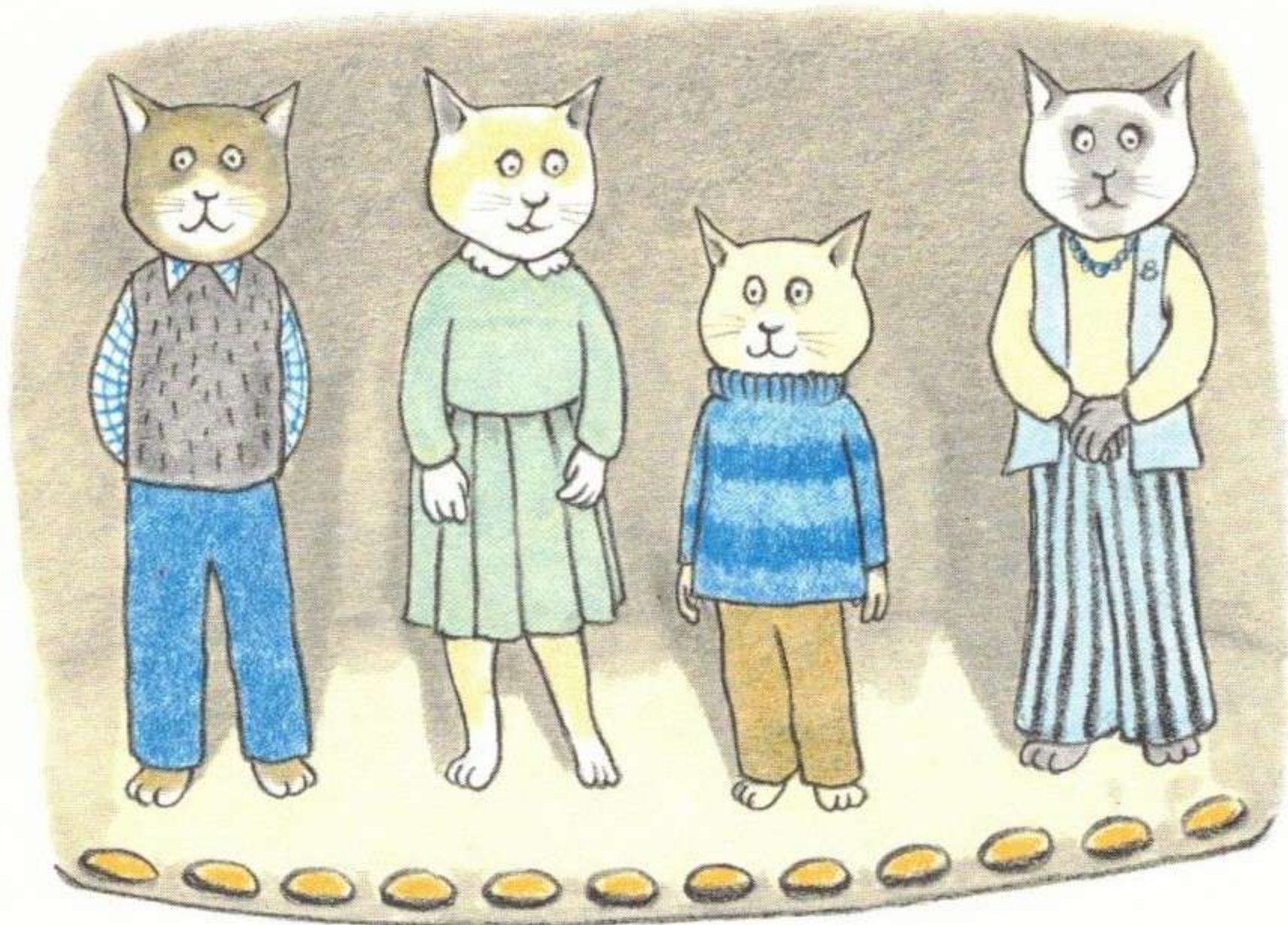


"I would like the part of the King,"  
he said.

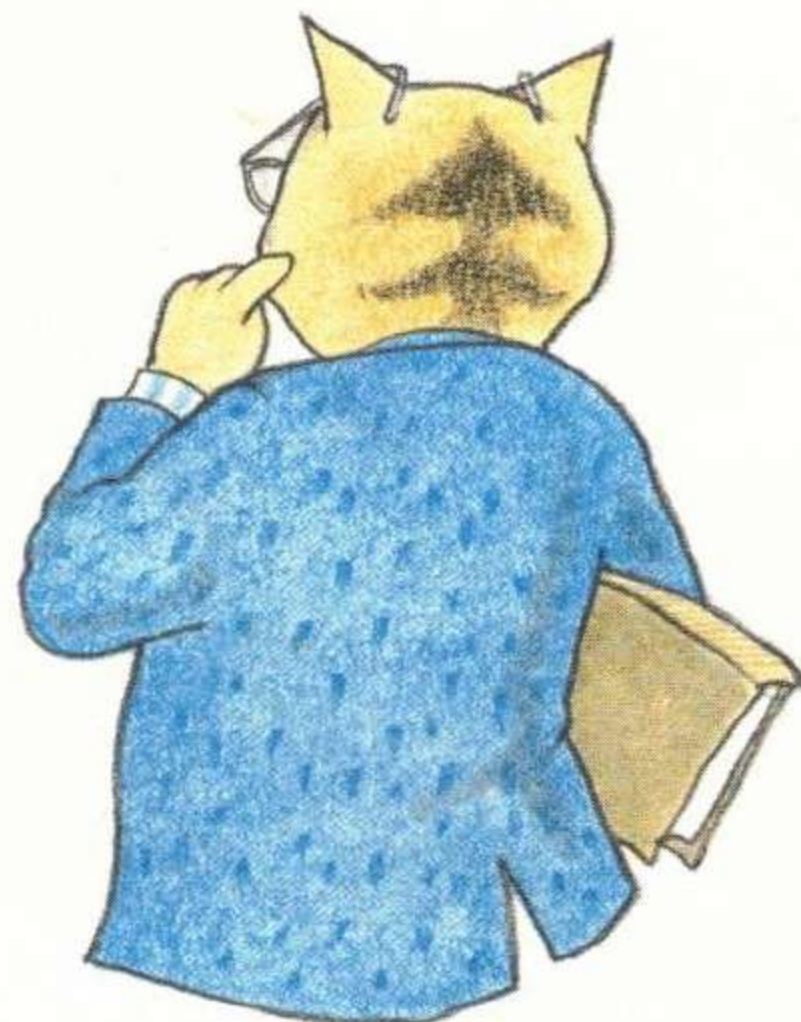


Fred went into the auditorium.





“Everyone line up onstage,” said Mr. Pennyman. He read the list of parts: “King, Queen, Princess, Frog.” He looked up and down the row.





"Clara will be Queen," said Mr. Pennyman.

"That's only fair," thought Fred.

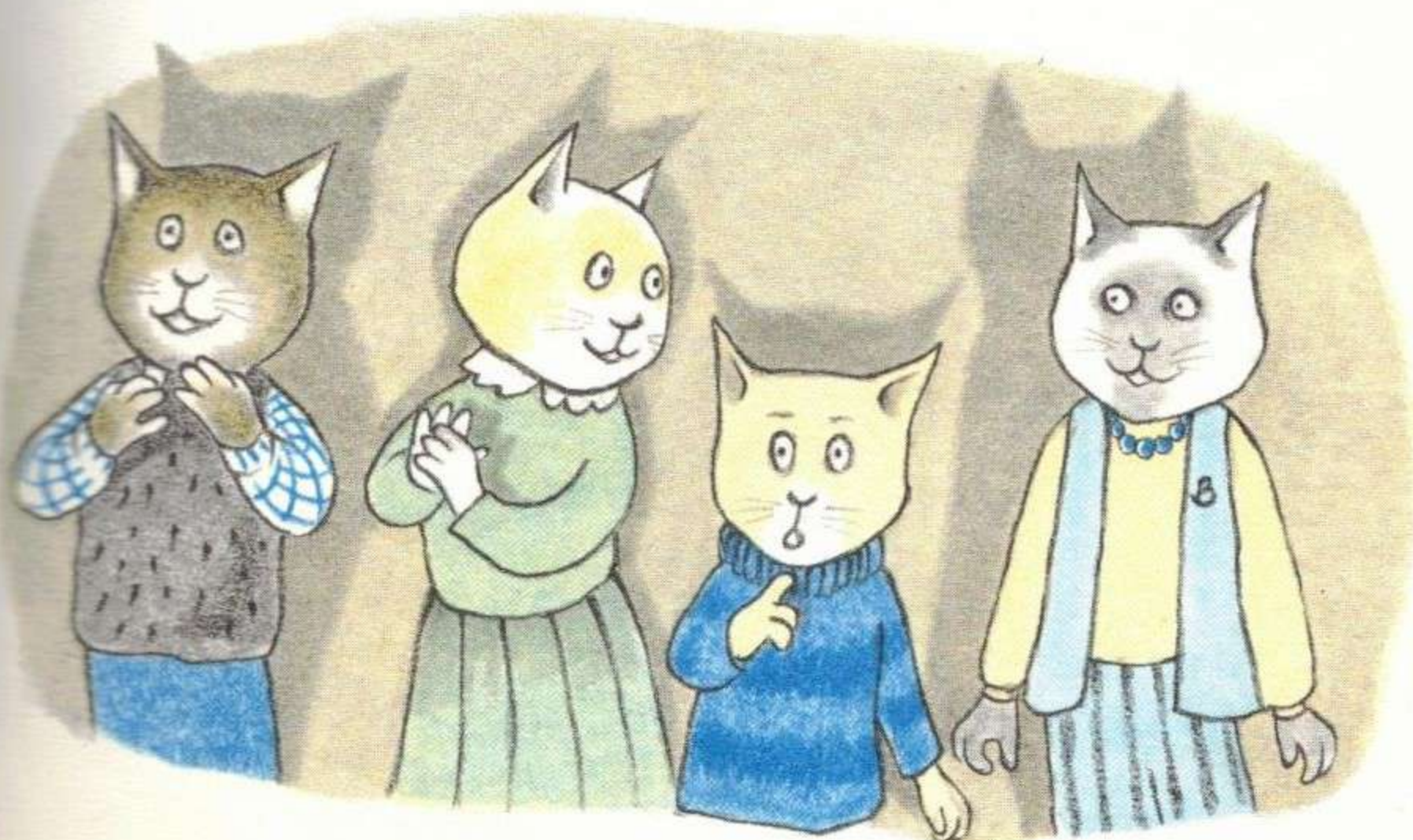
"She's a good actress."

"Beatrice will be Princess," said Mr. Pennyman.

"That's good," said Fred. He thought Beatrice was very nice.

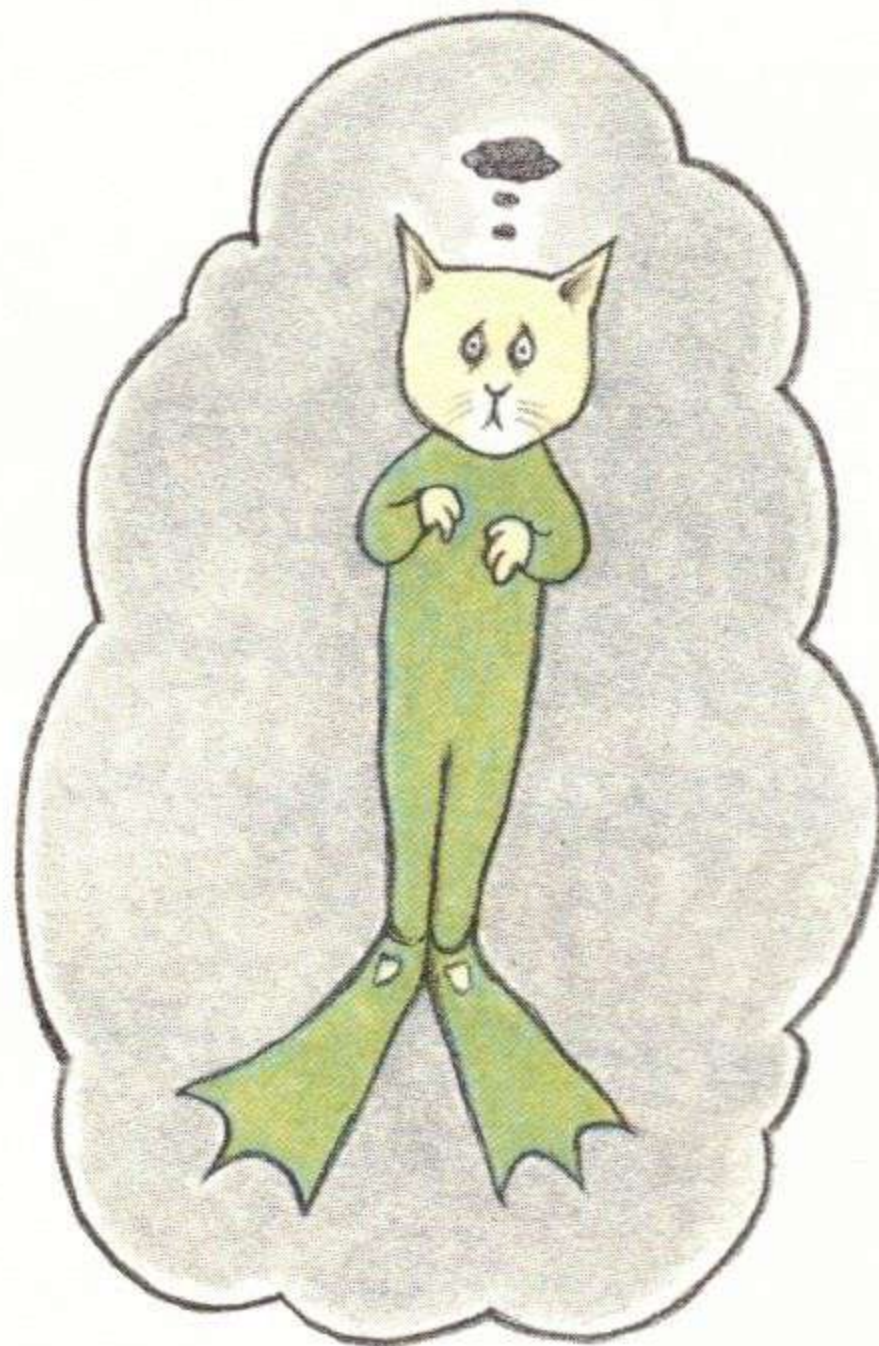
"Donald will be King," said Mr. Pennyman.

"Oh no," said Fred. "The only part left . . ."





“... is the Frog!”







"Just because I'm short, I get all the small parts," Fred complained. "I am always the flower or the baby or the rock. And now I'm the frog."



“Fred,” said Donald, “don’t you know the story of the Princess and the Frog? The frog turns into a handsome prince when Beatrice kisses you in the last act.”



“We’ll have to practice a lot,” said Beatrice.

“Oh boy,” said Fred.



## Fred and the Bully

Fred unwrapped his sandwich.

"Yum," said Fred.

He was always hungry by the time the lunch bell rang.

"Hand it over, Shrimp!"

It was Clarence, the school bully.





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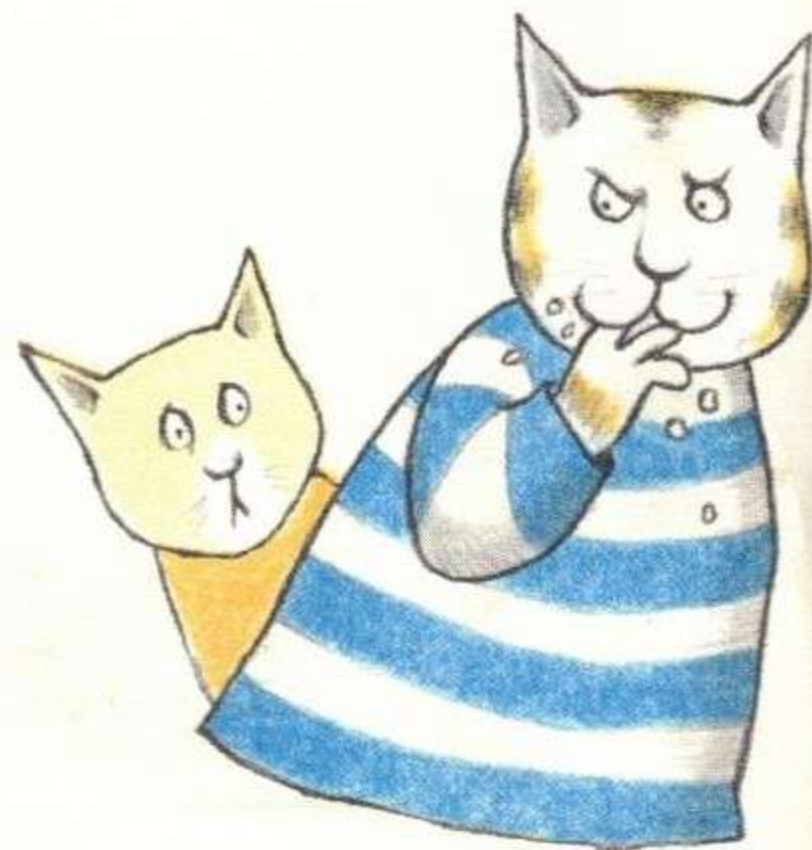
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"Oh no," said Fred. "Not my peanut butter sandwich."

"What are you going to do about it, Shorty?" growled Clarence.

He grabbed the sandwich and ate it in three big bites.





The next day, Clarence was back.

"I'll take that," he said, pointing to Fred's tuna fish sandwich.

"Your sandwiches are so good, I guess I'll have one every day," snarled Clarence.



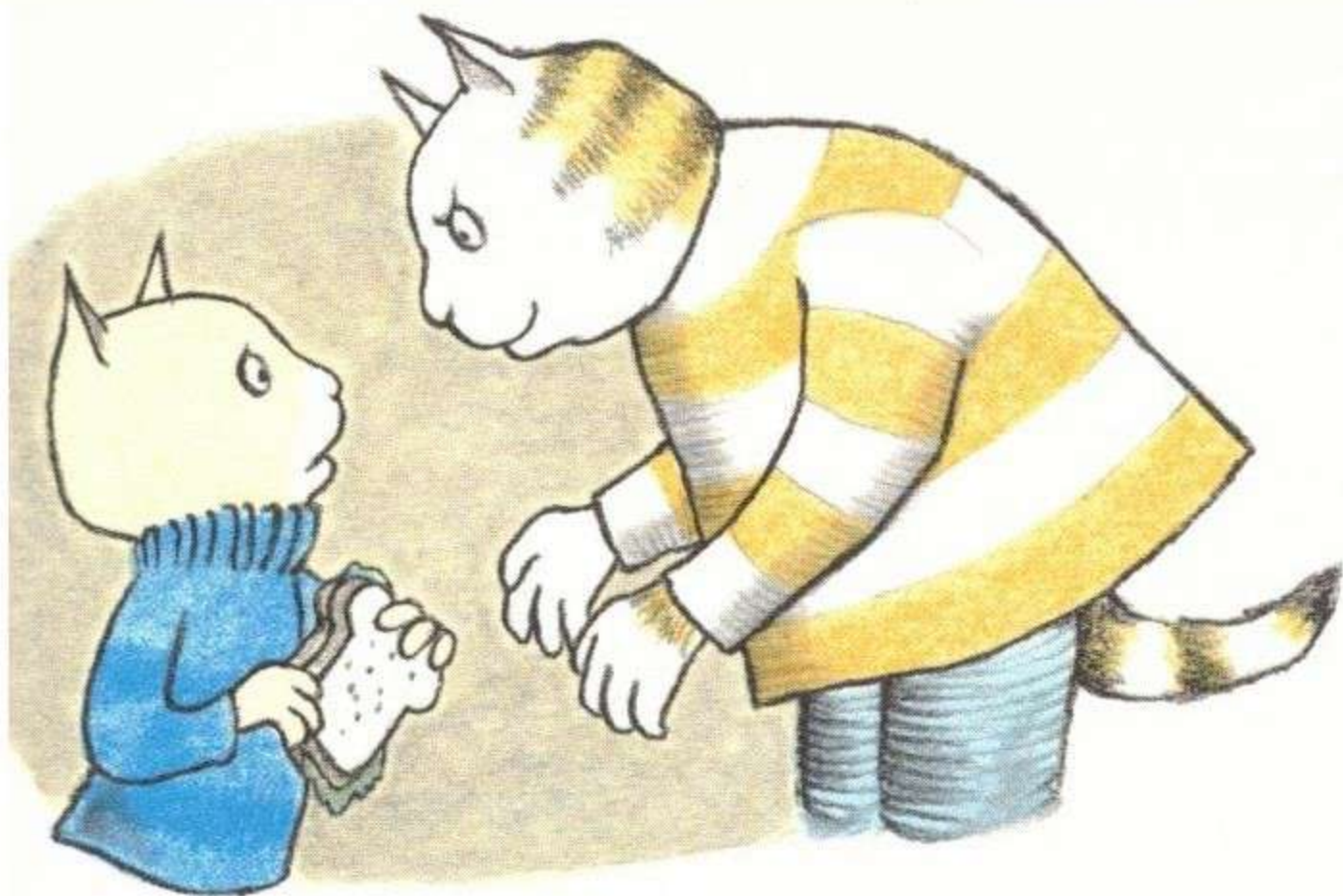
"Just because I'm short, Clarence thinks he can push me around," said Fred.





The next morning Fred made a very special sandwich.

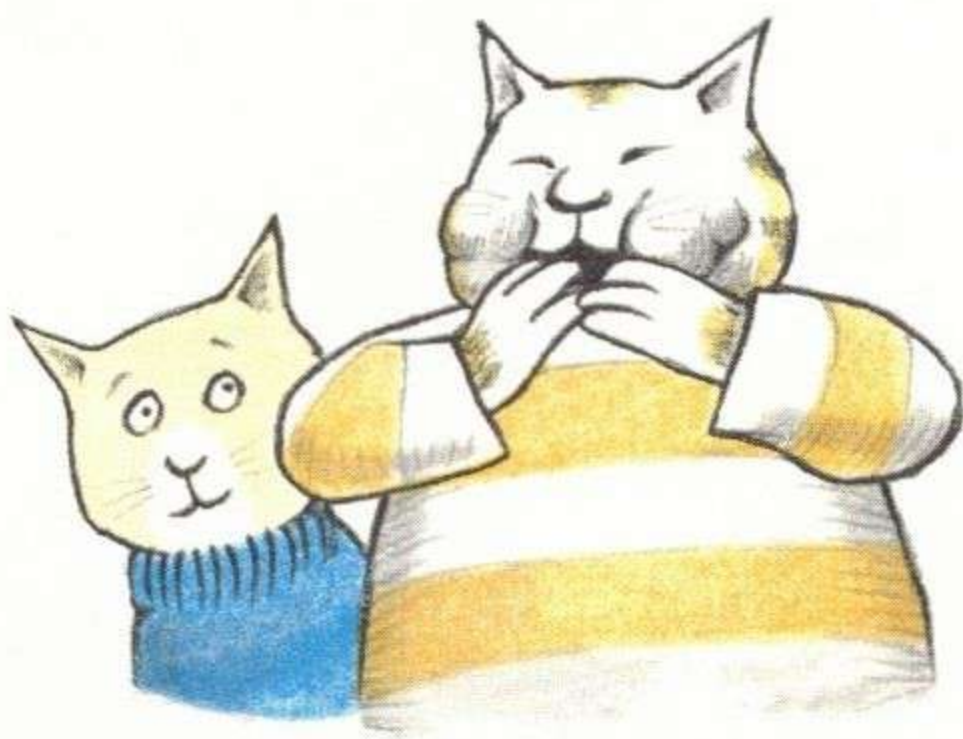




At lunchtime, Clarence was waiting  
for Fred.

"Please don't take my sandwich,"  
said Fred. "It's the best one I've  
had all week."

"Then it must be delicious," said  
Clarence. He popped the whole  
sandwich into his mouth.



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“PTOOEY!” gasped Clarence.



“I’m sorry you didn’t like it,” said Fred. “Worm on toast is my favorite.”



"I'm having it again tomorrow," said Fred. "You're welcome to share it with me."



But Clarence was nowhere in sight. "I don't think Clarence will be joining me for lunch anymore," said Fred.



## Fred Meets His Uncle Albert

Fred's parents were very excited when Uncle Albert came for a visit.

"We haven't seen Albert for a long time," said Fred's father.

Fred had never met his uncle.

"I wonder what he's like," thought Fred.





"Fred," said his mother, "this is  
your Uncle Albert."

"Hi, Short Stuff," said Uncle Albert.

"How's the weather down there? Ha Ha."



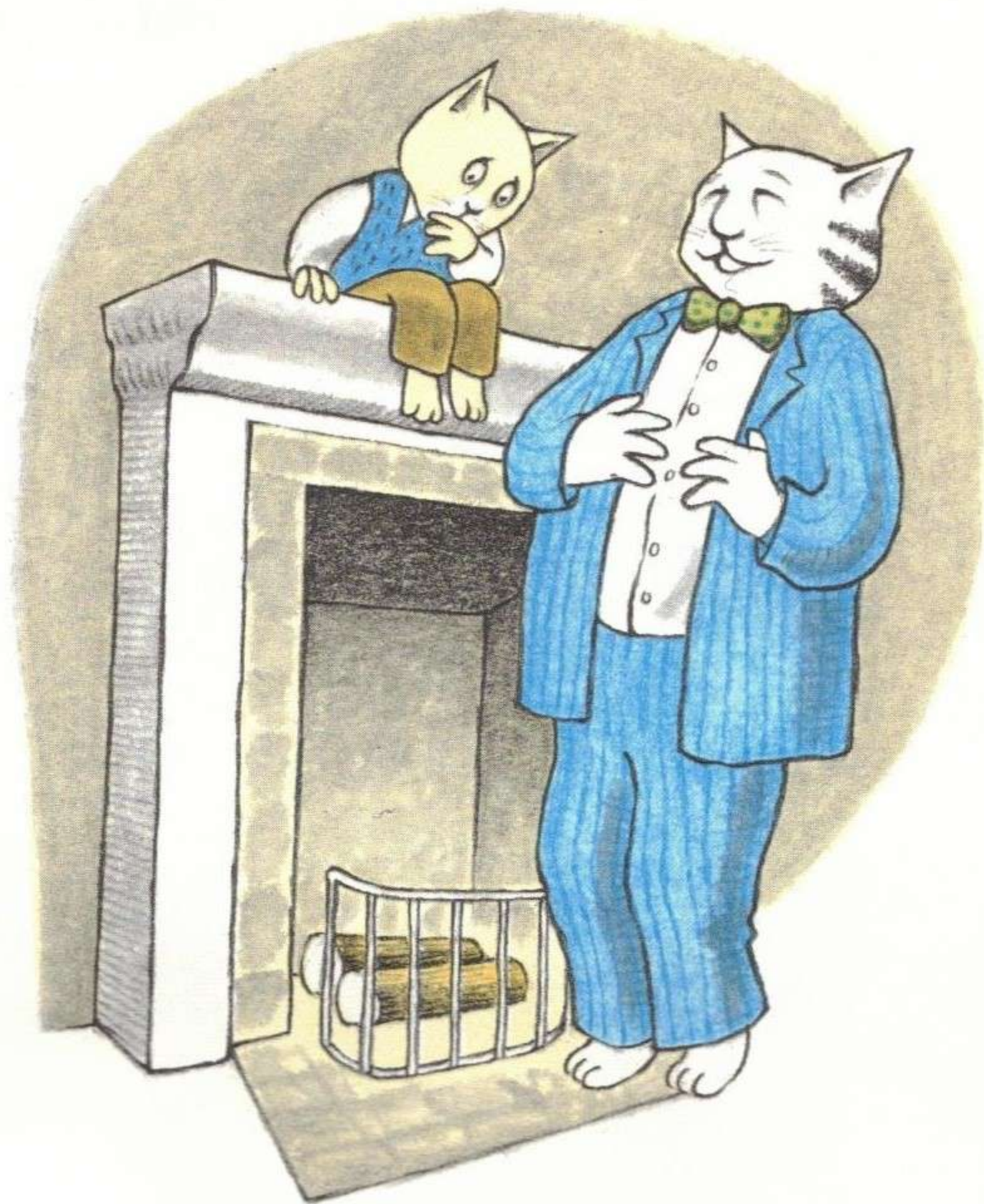
Fred didn't think that was funny, but  
he smiled politely.



“You’re mighty close to the ground,”  
said Uncle Albert. “Come on up here  
so we can talk.”







"I can't get down," cried Fred.  
"Ho Ho," laughed Uncle Albert.

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When Uncle Albert had gone, Fred said:  
“It is no fun being short.”



“Don’t feel bad,” said his father.  
“I have something to show you.”  
He got out the family photograph  
album.





"Look," said Fred's father. "That's me when I was a boy."

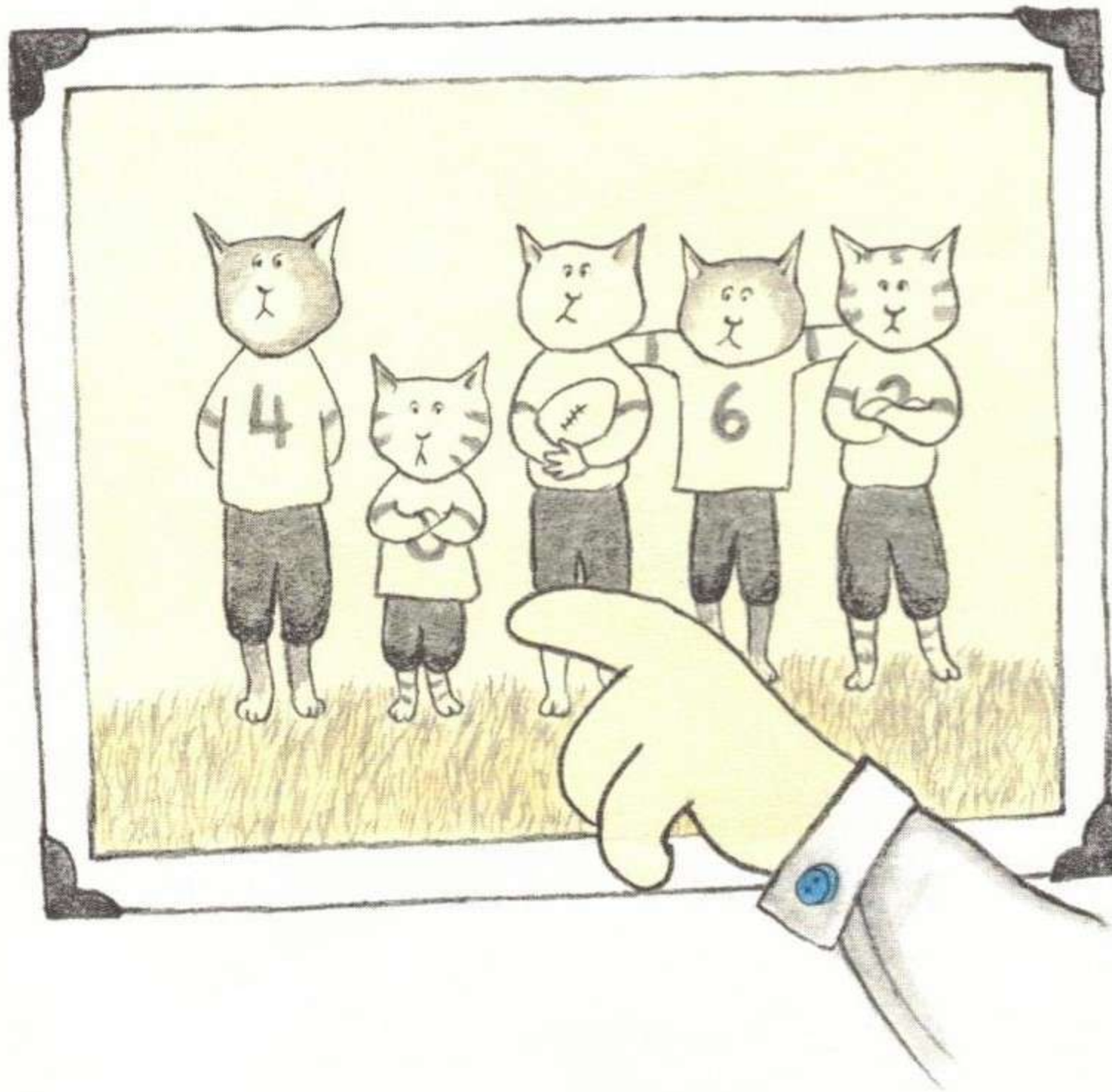
Sitting in Father's lap made Fred feel better. He turned the pages of the album. He forgot all about Uncle Albert.

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Then Fred saw a picture that upset him  
all over again.

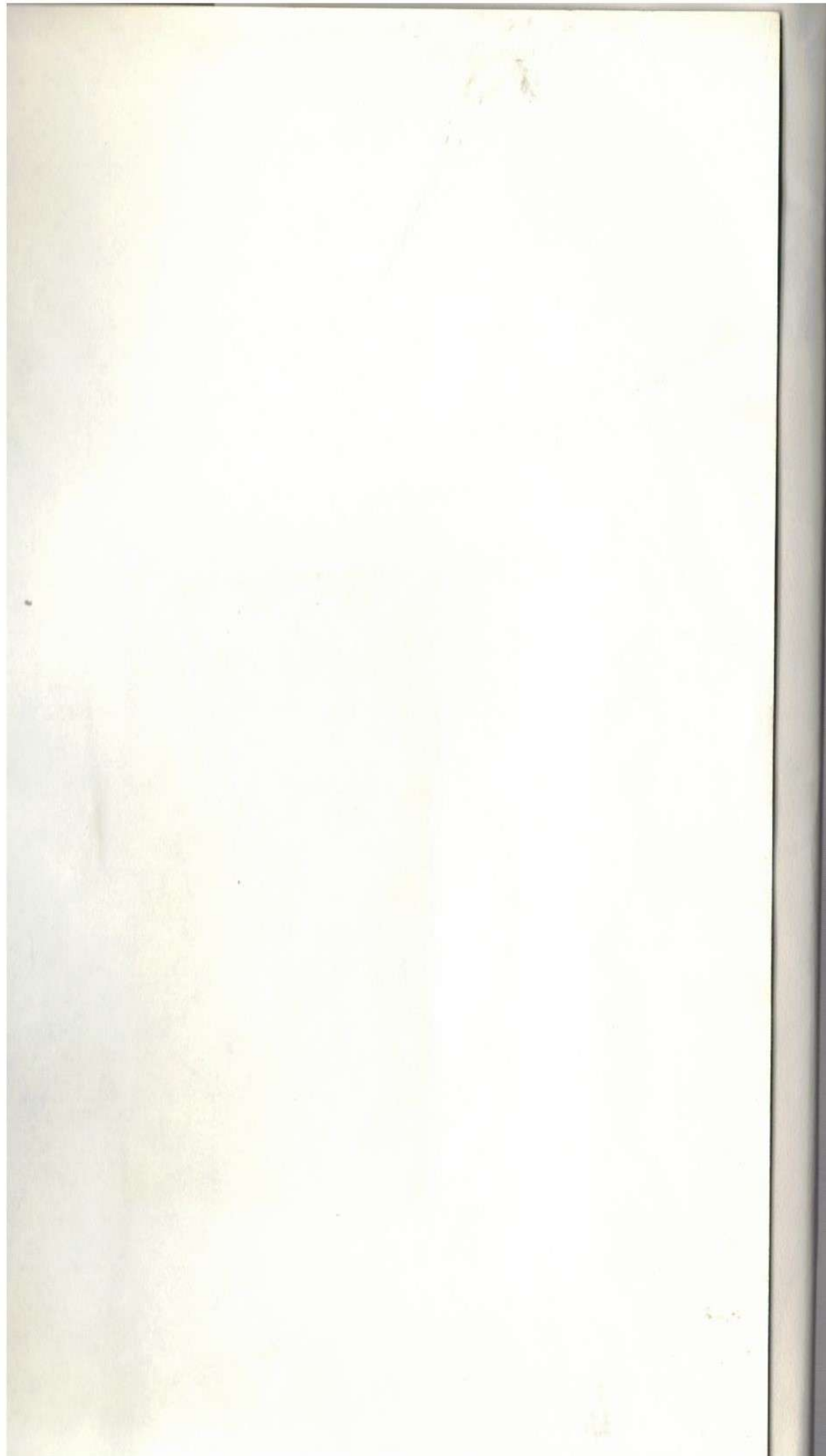
"I certainly know how he feels," said  
Fred.



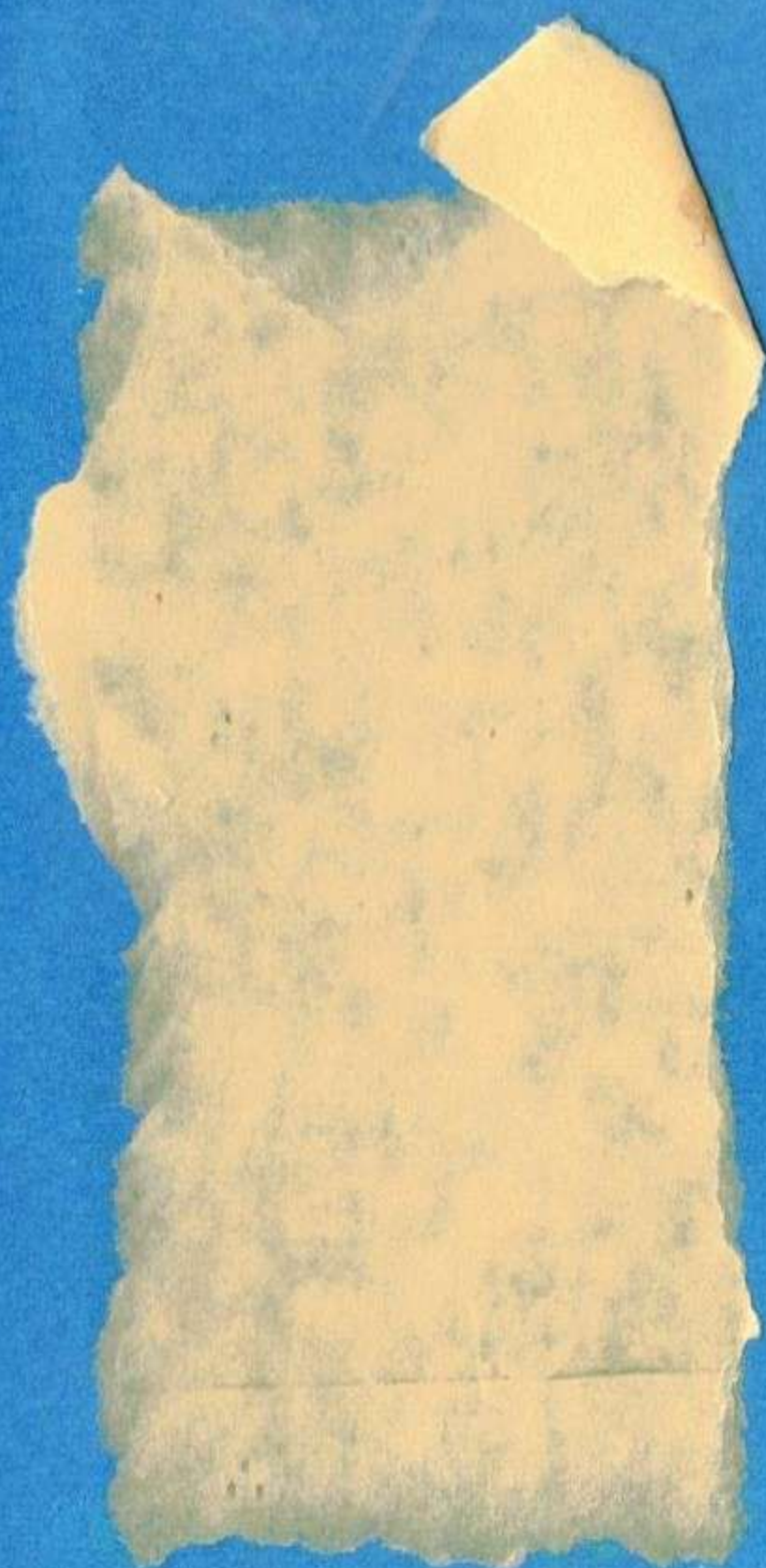
"Do you know who he is?" asked his  
father.

"No," said Fred.









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Susan Meddaugh studied art at Wheaton College and the Art-Students League in New York. She then worked for ten years with a leading publisher as Art Director and Designer of children's books. Her design has received numerous awards from such organizations as the American Institute of Graphic Arts, the Society of Illustrators and the New England Book Show. Currently the author lives in Charlestown, Massachusetts, where she works as a free-lance illustrator.

The work for **Too Short Fred** was prepared with pencil as three-color process-separated art. Each color was considered as a separate drawing in reverse, photographed, plated, and then printed in the special ink colors selected for the book.



